here on earth

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by stereobone

Summary

"I caught you," Bucky says.

Gale can't get his mouth to work.

"You said I'd never catch you, but I did," Bucky says.

Notes

this is a little something for jen's amazing mota art which i pray to every night. 12 years strong and tumblr user @crowthis is still my muse, wow. here's lookin' at you, toots ♥ *shoots for the moon and misses by light years*

on tumblr @stereobone as usual, thanks for reading xx

The sky is eerie after the air raid. Low-hanging smoke like cloud cover glowing from the moon surrounds the base when Bucky has Gale follow him to the airfield. They should be in bed. The air raid is long over and so is the party, the whole base dark, quiet. Right now, it feels like the whole world is quiet. But Bucky had woken Gale up after just a few hours of sleep and told him to get dressed quickly. Meet him outside. His mouth was set in a firm line and Gale obeyed without a second thought, no clue what was going on, half lost in sleep and half awake.

They're on the far side of the base now, having walked for a good fifteen minutes. Bucky is ahead of Gale, silent and walking with determination. He hasn't said a word since Gale met him outside. He doesn't take a drink from his flask or light up a cigarette. The air smells faintly of sulfur and wall plaster from the air raid. Gale is about to ask him what the hell is going on, because they're not even supposed to be out here, when Bucky stops. He doesn't turn around. Gale stares at his back.

"Bucky?"

He gets no answer. Just the broad expense of Bucky's back for another few second before Bucky turns around quicker than Gale can comprehend and tackles him to the ground. Gale hits the grass with a grunt, hands scrambling for Bucky's shoulders to push him off.

"Jesus, what the hell has gotten into you, Bucky?"

Gale looks up at him and his breath catches. There's nothing playful about Bucky's face. He has the same look he gets before they're about to fly a mission, like he's hoping he doesn't fall. He's caging Gale in with his arms on either side of his head, and suddenly Gale feels trapped.

"I caught you," Bucky says.

Gale can't get his mouth to work.

"You said I'd never catch you, but I did," Bucky says.

Gale flushes and flashes back to earlier in the night, to the bike race in the mess hall. He'd been joking when he'd said that, but then, he didn't need to word it like that. He didn't need to say those words at all. So maybe he wasn't joking. Maybe he'd been goading. Egging Bucky on to do the one thing Gale has always been sure he'd never do.

It makes his throat burn, to think that Bucky would do this *now,* do this *here.*

"Come on," he says. "We're not playing around anymore."

He tries to roll out from under Bucky and Bucky doesn't move. He keeps his hands planted on either side of Gale's head.

"I'm not playing around, Buck. I caught you, fair and square. So now what?"

"Don't do this," Gale says. There's a hot mixture of fear and anger brewing in his gut. "You can't do this to me."

It feels personal, somehow, not about *them* but about Gale in particular. And it feels terrifying. Gale can't even name the *now what* Bucky is referring to. The image goes warped in his mind.

Bucky sighs above him and rolls off Gale so that he's sitting in the grass. Gale stays on his back a moment, paralyzed, then scrambles to get up. He doesn't leave, even though he tells himself that he should. He sits next to Bucky on the grass. Wrings his hands together.

"You can't joke around like that," he says.

Bucky laughs into the night air, near silent and humorless, arms draped over his knees. They're sitting too close together.

"I told you already, Buck, I'm not. You know I'm not."

Gale looks down at the grass. He's not ready to do this. He's not ready to admit that the way Bucky touches him, the way Gale allows it and covets it, is more than just friendship between two men. They'd agreed, Gale thought, to never talk about this. They had never said that out loud, but they'd agreed to it, hadn't they? It doesn't matter if they'd jerked off together a few times in flying school under the cover of darkness and their blankets. Or if Gale has fisted his cock in secret to the shape of Bucky's shoulders. Doesn't matter if Gale walked in on Bucky with a girl once, and Bucky'd caught his eyes, sunk back into her slow like he was imagining it was Gale he was screwing and Gale, Gale didn't look away. None of that matters because they never called those times out for what they were, never did a thing about them. Gale focuses on the grass, the rustle of it beneath his boots as he shifts.

When he looks up again, Bucky is staring out at the trees.

"Why now?" he asks.

Bucky turns his head. His hair has grown out a little, a few strands curling at his forehead. He looks pale and wild in the darkness. Handsome. He's so handsome it makes Gale sick to think of it. Makes him want. And worst of all, it makes him want to reveal.

"Maybe I got a thing for guys telling me I remind them of their dad."

"John," Gale says.

Bucky stares at him. He looks ripe with it, the need to confess. Surrender.

"No one trusts me the way you do," he says. "I'm not talking about up there, in the sky. I mean down here. Christ. Your face when you told me all that during the air raid, Buck. I could've kissed you right then. And I'll slip up real soon if you don't let me down hard right now, I mean it. Swear to god I mean it, Buck."

Something warm and traitorous wedges its way into Gale's chest. He can't gauge now what his face had looked like. Just remembers how he'd felt, even with the bombs dropping so close to them—safe, and not because they were in the shelter, but because Bucky was nearby, because he knew Bucky would understand. Gale had never told anyone those things about his father before. But he'd told Bucky. It wasn't something he had to think about. Bucky would know how to hold those parts of Gale. It's not something he can lie about.

"I do trust you," Gale says. "But you scare me, John."

He should say no. He should let Bucky down right now so they can both let this go and walk away clean. Only when Bucky tilts his head closer, Gale doesn't put distance between.

"I'm about as scary as a week-old kitten," Bucky says. "You, on the other hand…"

Gale can't help it, he laughs. Bucky always knows how to pull that out of him.

"You sayin' you're scared of me?"

"Terrified, Buck."

Bucky is looking at his lips, breathing coming faster, close enough that

Gale can feel the warmth of it against his own lips.

"Tell me no, Gale," he says. "Tell me no and I'll get up and walk away right now."

Gale says nothing. He holds his breath in his chest and waits, terrified, filled with awful hope. Bucky's hand finds a familiar place on his thigh. Then Bucky leans in, and Gale meets him for it without thinking too much about what they're doing at all, eyes falling shut. Bucky's lips are rough. His mustache is strangely soft against Gale's mouth. The kiss is chaste, almost frustratingly so, just their lips slotted together.

Then Gale remembers to breathe and inhales, takes Bucky's lips between his own, and Bucky pushes closer to him, hand squeezing Gale's thigh as his tongue licks into Gale's mouth. Gale kisses him back, hands still gripped together because he's afraid if he touches Bucky now, he won't stop. They just kiss like that in the darkness, drink each other up. Bucky's free hand cups the back of Gale's neck. Holds Gale to him like Gale might float away otherwise, thumb caressing the edge of Gale's hairline until Gale forces himself to break free from Bucky's mouth. He pants against Bucky's cheek, both soothed by the touch of Bucky's hand on his thigh and borderline hysterical because of it.

Bucky kisses the apple of his cheek, so tender that an odd whimper escapes Gale's throat. He doesn't know what to say. He's trembling. He's happy and he's frightened.

"You know I'm never walking away now," Bucky says.

Gale lets his head drop, and there the feeling remains. Terror. Happiness. A trembling he doesn't want to ever let go of. Something dangerously close to hope. Bucky's lips brush against his forehead. Gale doesn't think he can live without them now that he's had a taste. He's ruined.

"I know," Gale says. He's ruined.

But he's always known that.

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